

By Renée Coppock , part 2

The Saturday afternoon session of the Zonta International European Inter-District meeting began with a panel discussion hosted by Bettina Weiguny. Panelists included Dr. Alexandra Niessen-Ruenzi, Dr. Barbara Bohnlein, Dr. Katarina Barley, Karin Nordmeyer (President of UNIFEM/UN Women, 2004-2022), and Dr. Desiree-Jessica Pely (founder of loyee.io/San Francisco and meta wealth.tech/Berlin).

When asked what kind of world they would want to live in, Dr. Barley replied that we need to take a holistic approach to the world in all areas, much like is set forth in the Sustainable Development Goals. We need to recognize the damages caused by colonialism and take responsibility. Dr. Niessen-Ruenzi stated we need to pay attention to how women invest. Women prefer sustainability in investments.

The panel was next asked why lended funds are not available to women, when statistics show that women invest better. Men tend to lend to men. Women must learn to better support each other. There also must be more education on finances. We need more women decision makers in upper level financing and investments.

The panel discussed the pros and cons of gender quotas. Such quotas may help at the entry level, but do not fundamentally change what women can do in society. We need cultural change. We need more allies to make meaningful change to social norms. People must also learn to but career and child/family together in their minds. They are not mutually exclusive.

More women CEOs are essential. Also, consideration should also be given to the fact that the gender pay gap shrinks after a male CEO has a first child that is a girl. The panel had a lively and entertaining discussion.

After the lunch break, attendees could choose 2 workshops. The first workshop I attended was Securing Women's Rights-International Standards - Achievements and Gaps at the National Level. The panel included moderator Irma Ertman, Vice Representative at the Council of Europe; Dr. Ingeborg Geyer, Zonta Club of Vienna and ZI Representative at the UN Vienna; Anita Schnetzer-Spranger, ZC Mainz, ZI Representative at the Council of Europe; ZI Vice-President, Fernanda Gallo Freschi; ZC of Tampere I member Tuija Heikkilä; and ZI District 30 Governor Ivana Sarotto.

Dr. Geyer discussed the UN Commission on the Status of Women and international binding instruments, such as CEDAW and ILO C190. For a complete list of the status of the ratification of 18 International Human Rights Treaties, see <https://indicators.ohchr.org>. Since 2019, CEDAW has included a review of child marriage and FGM. Shadow reports are produced for each CEDAW review. Zontians can be active in the formulation of National CEDAW reports. 26 countries have ratified ILO C190, which recognizes that preventing and eliminating violence and harassment in the workplace requires Members to respect, promote and realize the fundamental principles and rights at work, as well as to promote decent working conditions. C190 provides the first international definition of violence and harassment in the world of work.

Anita Schnetzer-Spranger informed participants about the Council of Europe and its focus on human rights. She outlined the work completed and focus since 1950 to the present time. Importantly, the role of social partners and NGOs was strengthened in 1995. NGOs, such as Zonta, can lodge complaints for noncompliance, such as the gender pay gap and leadership disparity. Countries that instituted quotas complied with standards. While those that did not did not show much change.

VP Fernanda spoke about the new national standard for gender equity in Italy. Italy is seeking to improve its European ranking on the gender equality index (currently 14th). In March 2022, the guidelines on a management system for gender equality was released - UNI/PDR 125. In order to achieve a Gender Equality Certification, companies

and organizations must comply with at least 60% of the indicators. So far, 1123 sites for about 400 companies have been certified. Benefits? The company will improve its image and reputation, corporate culture and attract investors.

Tuija discussed the parental leave in Finland, which is currently ranked 2nd on the gender equality index. In Finland, more women graduate with a tertiary level degree than men. To keep women in the workforce and reduce the gender pay gap caused by maternity leave and childcare, Finland reformed its parental allowance system in 8/2022. The family leave and child responsibilities should be equal between the parents. Together, parents have a total of 320 days of paid leave—200 for birthing parent and 160 for other parent. One parent may give up to 63 days to the other parent. Currently, about 1/5 of fathers do not use their paid leave.

Ivanna spoke about equality in Bulgaria, which is 18th on the EU gender equity index. Women's salaries, on the average, are 13% below men's. Women have high degrees of education, but not represented in management positions. When they are, they are underpaid. Only 36.6% of political ministers are women, making it more difficult to change policies. Further, 24% of women have experienced sexual harassment.

The second workshop I attended was on fundraising. The host of the panel was Susan Georgijewitsch, ZC Frankfurt. The speaker was Ann-Kathrin Lisenhoff, former German Olympian (equestrian). Ann-Kathrin described how she was able to capitalize on her name to form a foundation for the benefit of UNICEF. She wanted to focus on girls' education. Her foundation provides a school in a box in developing countries. To be successful in such fundraising, an organization should always have an anchor investor, one that shares the same values and is excited about the mission for the fundraising. Other investors could then be contacted. A fundraising appeal must be very personal and authentic. Send a mailing to your network and use social media. Special events can be held. Sometimes the events are just to point out the problem and get people interested. Fundraising can also be done with an ambassador. She uses her horses. Remember to be the eye of the donor. What is the intended result and the plan to achieve that result? Show donors where all the money is going. Use the next generation for ideas and input. Use QR Codes to make giving easy. For Zonta, it's name is the value. Zonta stands for women's rights and education.

After the workshops, we heard from a very passionate Ukrainian member who had been a YWPA recipient. She understood she was not alone and has the support of Zonta members around the world. She thanked all Zontians, especially D27, for the outpouring of support and supplies. She stated that she is not part of a lost generation of Ukrainians. Her generation has learned how to survive.

To end the sessions, ZI President Ute Scholz, President-Elect Salla Tuominen, and VP Fernanda Gallo-Freschi answered "burning questions" that had been submitted by Governors or offered from the floor.

To conclude the meeting, we watched a video explaining why the next EIDM should be in Copenhagen, and then we're invited to the 2024 International Convention in Brisbane. It was a fabulous and informative meeting that gave us all an opportunity to greet friends and meet new ones.